

Rules of the Road

The following is a summary of the most basic “rules of the road” based on Inland and International Navigation Rules as presented by the U.S. Coast Guard. A complete copy of these rules may be downloaded at http://www.navcen.uscg.gov/mwv/mwv_files/NR_Files/navrules.pdf

Rules of the Road apply to vessels **in sight of one another** where there is a risk of collision. Other navigation rules apply in or near areas of restricted visibility such as fog, rain, or snow. Take time to learn the following two critical definitions of “**Give-way vessel**” and “**Stand-on vessel**”. Depending on the situation, your vessel will be either the “stand-on vessel” or the “give-way vessel”.

Give-way vessel- The vessel that is required to take early and substantial action to keep well away from other vessels by stopping, slowing down, or changing course.

Stand-on vessel- The vessel that must maintain its course and speed unless it becomes apparent that the give way vessel is not taking appropriate action. If you must take action to avoid a collision do not turn toward the give way vessel or cross in front of it.

Responsibilities Between Vessels:

If operating a power driven vessel you must give way to:

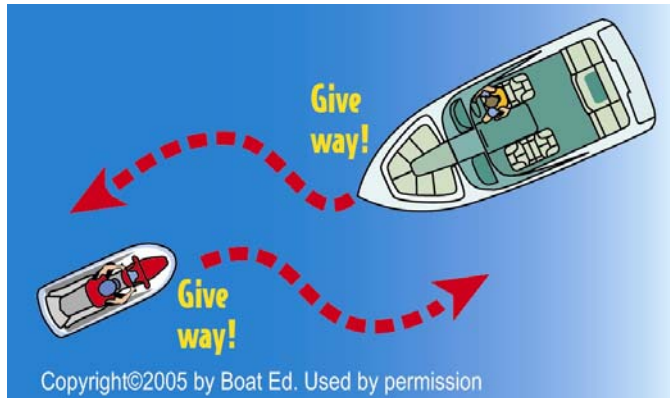
- Any vessel not under command, such as an anchored or disabled vessel.
- Any vessel restricted in its ability to maneuver, such as a vessel towing, laying cable, or picking up navigation markers, or a vessel constrained by its draft such as a large ship in a channel.
- A vessel engaged in commercial fishing
- A sailing vessel (sail only) unless it is overtaking

If operating a sailing vessel (sail only), you must give way to:

- Any vessel not under command
- Any vessel restricted in its ability to maneuver
- A vessel engaged in commercial fishing

When a power-driven vessel encounters another power-driven vessel the following rules apply:

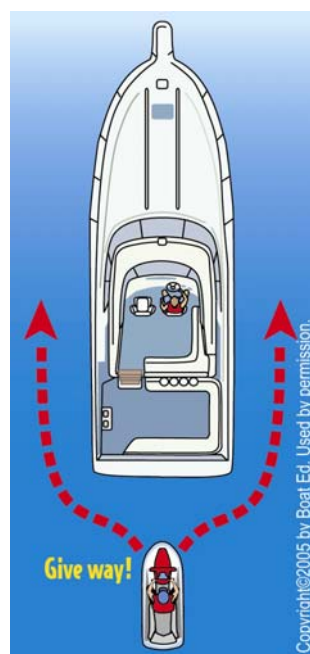
- Meeting head-on: Neither vessel is the stand-on vessel. Both vessels should turn to starboard (right).



- Paths that cross: The vessel on the port (left) is the give-way vessel. The vessel on the starboard (right) is the stand-on vessel.



- Overtaking: The vessel that is overtaking another vessel is the give-way vessel. The vessel being overtaken is the stand-on vessel.



Operating During Restricted Visibility (not in sight of one another)

All operators should navigate with extreme caution if visibility is restricted (fog, rain, snow). Every vessel must proceed at a safe speed and if necessary, the operator should reduce speed to idle speed.